



# The Medical Waste Reporter



## Announcements for Wisconsin's Medical Waste Generators

Reporting year 2009

Issued January 2010

### Congratulations to Wisconsin's Six 2009 Practice Greenhealth Award Winners!

Wisconsin's award winners are:

Environmental Leadership Circle (sustained members):

- Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire
- St. Mary's Hospital Med. Center, Green Bay
- Gunderson Lutheran, LaCrosse

Partner for Change Award:

- St. Vincent Hospital, Green Bay

Partner Recognition:

- Bellin Memorial Hospital, Green Bay



Champion for Change Award:

- PharmEcology Associates, LLC, Wauwatosa

Does your facility have a medical waste reduction plan? If so, it may qualify for a Partner for Change award. And if you have eliminated the use of mercury, you can apply for the Making Medicine Mercury Free award.

For information about the awards, visit [www.practicegreenhealth.org/awards](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org/awards). The deadline for applying this year is February 8, 2010.

### WasteCap Wisconsin Can Help You Recycle Construction Debris

Is your healthcare facility remodeling or expanding? Do you know where your construction and demolition (C&D) waste is going? Most likely it is going into a landfill--a 2009 DNR-funded study found nearly 30 percent of Wisconsin's landfilled waste is recoverable C&D material.

What if you could reuse or recycle that waste? Besides saving landfill space, you could save money, help the environment and foster good community relations.

Don't have to time to sort all that waste? [WasteCap Resource Solutions](http://www.wastecap.org) can help you recycle C&D materials. WasteCap is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that provides waste reduction and recycling assistance through business-to-business peer exchange, demonstration and education.

WasteCap offers construction waste management services such as: planning assistance, technical assistance, waste monitoring and measuring, and recycling documentation for C&D projects.

**To date, WasteCap and its clients have diverted more than 271,310 tons of construction and demolition materials from landfills.**

Here are a few of the Wisconsin healthcare facilities WasteCap has assisted:

- Aurora Medical Center, Grafton, diverted 8.4 million lbs (90% of its C&D waste)
- Froedtert Clinical Cancer Center, Milwaukee, diverted 42 million lbs (98%)
- Aurora St. Luke's Healing Garden, Milwaukee, diverted 206,620 lbs (89%)
- American Family Children's Hospital, Madison, diverted 2.5 million lbs (63%)

For more information about how WasteCap can help you reduce your C&D waste, please visit [www.wastecap.org](http://www.wastecap.org) or call (414) 961-1100.

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## Mercury → Reduction ← News

### Are Your Staff and Patients Aware of Fish Consumption Advisories?

Many people are unaware that eating certain fish can expose them to environmental toxins, such as mercury, which may cause cancers, developmental disabilities and other chronic conditions.

Primary care providers can help their patients recognize and minimize environmental health risks by alerting them to how the fish they eat or the products they buy, use and dispose may affect their health and their local ecosystems.

Here are some resources to help primary care providers learn more about environmental health, toxins and fish consumption:

- **Online course in Pediatric Environmental Health** This Physicians For Social Responsibility's self-guided course takes a total of about 90 minutes to complete and another 20 minutes to take the post-course test to qualify for credits:  
[http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/health\\_professionals/pediatrics.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/health_professionals/pediatrics.html)
- **Fish Facts for Health Professionals** This media series is four, three to five minute media modules designed for busy health professionals who want to learn more about the risks and benefits of fish consumption and methyl mercury (MeHg) exposure: [www.fish-facts.org](http://www.fish-facts.org)
- **DNR fish consumption advisories** are posted at  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption/index.html>
- **Wisconsin Healthy Homes Partnership** has a Web tool to help educators (including clinicians) and consumers assess the health of their homes: [www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/](http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/)
- **Home Environmental Health Risks** Search for this article by its title on the American Nurses Association Web site:  
[www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org)

Expect to hear more about fish advisories in the next year, as EPA has targeted this topic for funding projects to help clean up the Great Lakes.

## WH2E News

In January 2010, Wisconsin Healthcare for a Healthy Environment (WH2E) will sponsor a meeting on healthy food. Come learn why healthcare providers care not only about how to procure healthy food but also how to manage food waste sustainably.

To minimize winter travel, the Healthy Food meeting will be held twice: on January 26 in Madison and on January 27 in Eau Claire. For more information, contact DNR (see contact box).

WH2E's 2010 meetings will address medical device reprocessing and sharps in March, universal waste and paper recycling in June and mercury elimination and fish consumption in October.

WH2E met quarterly in 2009. Topics for 2009 included non-pharmaceutical hazardous wastes (January, St. Clare Hospital, Weston), infectious and medical waste reduction (June, All Saint's Hospital, Racine) and green building (October, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Appleton).

To learn more about WH2E or to join, visit [www.uwm.edu/shwec/wh2e/index.cfm](http://www.uwm.edu/shwec/wh2e/index.cfm). People on DNR's technical assistance email list receive notice of WH2E events. To join DNR's list, see the contact box below.

### Randy Case Retires

DNR's tireless mercury reduction advocate, Randy Case, has retired. As he left the building on his last day, he paused to reflect, and said, "Tell your readers it was all about partnerships. I really appreciated the medical and dental partnerships we had." All the best to you, Randy!

#### DNR STAFF CONTACTS

*Medical waste questions and to receive e-mail announcements about medical waste:*

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/>

## EPA's WasteWise Program Helps Track and Reduce Wastes

WasteWise is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program you can use to keep track of and reduce wastes. WasteWise is free and its data system is a free member benefit.

WasteWise uses the Re-TRAC reporting system which allows you to:

- collect, analyze and report all your recycling waste data online;
- instantly generate program performance and trend reports; and
- instantly calculate greenhouse gas emissions.

This data tool is not healthcare-specific and doesn't address, for example, regulated medical waste. However, it is a good place to start if you are not already tracking solid waste amounts and costs.

For more information and tutorials about the Re-TRAC system, see

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/smm/wastewise/retrac.htm>

WasteWise partners submit baseline data within two months of joining and report waste reduction data each year. Data submission helps organizations track their efforts and determine progress toward their goals.

All partners submitting annual data will receive a climate profile and certificate commending their organization for reporting annual achievements.

Joining is easy! The online form only takes a few minutes. Once you join, measuring your waste reduction through your baseline and annual updates is the key to the program. If you want to join WasteWise, all you need to fill out a very simple on-line partner registration form at [my.re-trac.com/NewWasteWisePartner.pm](http://my.re-trac.com/NewWasteWisePartner.pm)

Chippewa Valley Hospital is the only healthcare facility in Wisconsin to join so far. Look up other Wisconsin partners by searching at this page:

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/smm/wastewise/join.htm>

To find out more about WasteWise, you may

- call the toll-free Waste Wise Helpline at (800) EPA-WISE (372-9473),
- send an e-mail to [WasteWise@icfi.com](mailto:WasteWise@icfi.com),

- go to [www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise) , or
- contact Donna Twickler of EPA Region 5, 312-886-6184, [Twickler.Donna@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:Twickler.Donna@epamail.epa.gov).

### Waste Reduction can:

- lower waste disposal costs;
- improve patient outcomes;
- improve staff health, safety, attendance and morale;
- earn prestigious awards; and
- foster better community relations.

## Reducing Paper Waste Related to Annual Reporting

Last year, the DNR received a thoughtful letter suggesting ways to reduce the paper waste associated with infectious waste annual reports.

Unfortunately, the ideal solution, electronic reporting, is not possible right now due to budget cuts. However, DNR does try to reduce paper waste when possible.

For example, we did incorporate a few paper-saving and self-implementing features in the medical waste rule (NR 526) itself:

- Generators report waste sums annually, instead of submitting each infectious waste manifest.
- Generators do not submit their medical waste reduction plans to DNR, but do submit brief annual descriptions of progress toward goals.
- DNR may approve alternative recordkeeping and manifesting schemes. (We have approved one infectious waste firm to use electronic manifests.)
- Most small generators are exempt from annual reporting and other paperwork.

And, while administering NR 526, DNR has reduced paper waste by:

- combining the two annual reports (one on infectious waste generation, the other on medical waste reduction) into one report form;
- using recycled paper and soy inks;
- pre-printing the forms on two sides of paper;
- consolidating billing with other DNR bills;

- posting this newsletter, the *Medical Waste Reporter*, online instead of mailing it; and
- sending technical assistance by e-mail.

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### ***Reducing Paper Waste***, continued from p. 3

#### **What can you do to reduce paper waste related to annual reports?**

- Ask your vendor to offer electronic manifests.
- Join Practice Green Health and use the Greenhealth Tracker™ data tool which stores infectious waste data online.
- Keep records only as long as necessary. The retention time is five years for facilities who must implement medical waste reduction plans; three years for others.
- Keep only one copy of manifests.
- Keep records in a secure and well-known location. Incomplete or lost records waste time! See s. NR 526.14 for more about record contents and retention.
- Limit your answers to lines O and P to a few sentences for each question, which collectively should fit on 1 sheet of paper. Use lists instead of lengthy descriptions.
- Do not send copies of manifests, complex reports or your medical waste reduction plan.
- Use graphs sparingly or not at all.
- Print on both sides of the paper.
- Answer all the questions. A complete report avoids follow-up correspondence.
- Implement a paper recycling program. See [Waste Reduction and Recycling: A Guide for Wisconsin Healthcare -- DNR PUBL WA 1150](#)

## **NEW RESOURCES**

for ideas and resources.

DNR is committed to reducing paper waste and is glad so many of you are too. Let's do it together.

*To learn about the latest resources throughout the year, join DNR's medical waste e-mail announcement list (see contact box on page 2).*

### **Healthcare waste**

DNR Medical Waste Web pages describe how to identify, manage and reduce infectious/medical waste <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/>

DNR Healthcare Waste Web pages describe how

to manage the many different types of waste generated at health care facilities.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/Business.htm>

The UW-Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center hires UW students as interns to prevent and reduce waste in healthcare facilities. For applications, projects and results, see:

<http://www.uwm.edu/shwec/index.cfm>

### **Pharmaceutical waste**

DNR Pharmaceutical Waste Web pages discuss managing and reducing pharmaceutical waste for households and non-households

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/healthwaste/>

*Managing Pharmaceutical Wastes, a 10-Step Blueprint for Healthcare Facilities in the United States*, updated August 2008, is available at [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org) and at [www.hercenter.org](http://www.hercenter.org)

### **Healthy Food in Healthcare**

Healthcare Without Harm's food pages explain why healthcare should care about food and what to do about it: [www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org](http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org)

Biodegradable Products Institute has a list of certified compostable food service items:

[www.bpiworld.org/](http://www.bpiworld.org/)

### **Construction and Demolition Waste**

EPA's toolkit can help "reduce, reuse, recycle" C&D waste

<http://www.epa.gov/wastes/nonhaz/industrial/cd/index.htm>

EPA's "Using Recycled Industrial Materials in Buildings

<http://www.epa.gov/wastes/conserve/imr/pdfs/recy>

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